



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER/CEO

STEVE YOUNG

## Tree Trimming Improves Service for All Members

**ONE OF THE THINGS** I love most about our community is the natural beauty that surrounds us. We are fortunate to have so many trees that offer beauty, shade and habitat for all sorts of birds and other wildlife. We know that you appreciate our community for many of the same reasons.

That's why Hamilton County Electric Cooperative strives to balance maintaining beautiful surroundings with ensuring a reliable power supply by keeping power lines clear in rights-of-way.

While we recognize and appreciate the beauty of trees, there are three main benefits to trimming trees in ROW areas. But before I touch on those reasons, let me first explain what a right-of-way is and how it may impact you.

All the land that we use to construct, maintain, replace and repair underground and overhead power lines makes up our rights-of-way. These protected areas enable the co-op to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder power line installation, maintenance or operation.

### Safety

First and foremost, we care about our members and put their safety and that of our lineworkers above all else. Trees that are touching power lines in our members' yards can pose a grave threat. If children access those trees, they can potentially climb into a danger zone. Electricity can arc, or jump, from a power line to a nearby conductor such as a tree.

A proactive approach also diminishes the chances of branches or trees falling during severe weather events, which make it more complicated and dangerous for lineworkers to restore power.

### Reliability

Of course, one of the biggest benefits of a smart vegetation management program is reliability. Strategic tree trimming reduces the frequency of downed lines that cause power outages. Generally speaking, healthy trees don't fall on power lines, and clear lines don't cause problems. Proactive trimming and pruning keep lines clear to promote reliability.

### Affordability

As you know, Hamilton County EC is a not-for-profit cooperative, and that means we strive to keep our costs in check to keep our rates affordable. This extends to our approach to vegetation management. If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs also increases. Effective tree trimming and other vegetation management efforts keep costs down for everyone.

Our community is a special place. We appreciate

the beauty trees provide, but we also know you depend on us to provide reliable energy. Through vegetation management, we can keep power lines clear, prepare for future weather events and secure the reliability of the grid. ■



ROW areas are typically on public lands or located near a business or home. Regardless, Hamilton County EC must be able to maintain the power lines above and below the ROW.

The goal of our vegetation management program is to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our community. Proactive vegetation management benefits co-op members in three tangible ways.

# HCEC Annual Meeting Canceled; Election To Go on as Planned

**THE 82ND ANNUAL** membership meeting of Hamilton County Electric Cooperative has been canceled due to concerns about COVID-19 as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continues to advise against large indoor gatherings. The meeting is usually held the first Friday in August at the Hamilton Independent School District's Chandler Craig Auditorium with approximately 1,000 attendees.

As we continue to look out for the health and well-being of our members, employees and communities, the board of directors and management feel it's in the best interests of everyone to cancel this year's meeting. We appreciate your patience and understanding during these uncertain times.

However, the election of directors by mailed ballots will carry on as usual.

To maintain equitable geographical representation of all areas on the board of directors, Hamilton County EC's bylaws provide for seven districts from which directors are to be elected. The three-year terms of the directors representing districts 2 and 5 expire this year.

- ▶ District 2 is the area east of U.S. Highway 281 in Hamilton County served by the cooperative.
- ▶ District 5 is the area west of U.S. Highway 281 in Lampasas County and including all areas in San Saba and Llano counties served by the cooperative.

One ballot will be mailed to each member in a separate mailing June 23. Any member may vote for one candidate in each district listed on the ballot. You do not have to live in one of these areas to cast your vote. Voter membership must be confirmed for votes to be counted. Please include your name and address on the ballot return envelope so the co-op can use it to confirm voter membership. Please do not enclose bill payment in the ballot envelope.

The votes will be counted Friday, August 6. Members must mail their ballots in time for them to arrive in the Hamilton County EC post office box by noon Friday, August 6. Results of the director elections will be posted on HCEC's website, [hamiltonelectric.coop](http://hamiltonelectric.coop), and Facebook page and published in the October issue of *Texas Co-op Power*. ■

## Hamilton County Electric Cooperative Association

### CONTACT US

112 E. Gentry St., Hamilton  
P.O. Box 753, Hamilton, TX 76531

**Local** (254) 386-3123

**Toll-Free** 1-800-595-3401

**Web** [hamiltonelectric.coop](http://hamiltonelectric.coop)

### General Manager/CEO

Steve Young

### Board of Directors

**Sam Campbell**, President, District 6

**Dusty Duncan**, Vice President, District 5

**Robert Straley**, Secretary-Treasurer, District 4

**Jack Caldwell**, District 1

**Melvin Eilers Jr.**, District 7

**Brandon Haile**, District 2

**Ervin Koerth**, District 3

## 24/7

## Outage Hotline Numbers

For information and to report outages, please call us.

### LOCAL

(254) 386-3123

### TOLL-FREE

1-800-595-3401

### ABOUT HAMILTON COUNTY EC

HCEC owns and maintains more than 4,000 miles of line to provide electric service to more than 12,000 members in Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Mills and San Saba counties.

### PAYMENT OPTIONS AND LOCATIONS

**Online** at [hamiltonelectric.coop](http://hamiltonelectric.coop)

**Call** 1-877-833-4031 to pay using our automated phone system (credit/debit card or check).

**Bank draft** can be set up or bill payments can be charged to a debit or credit card monthly.

### Hamilton County EC Office

112 E. Gentry, Hamilton

### Brown & Wesson Insurance

915 Third St., Goldthwaite

### Fort Gates Water Corporation

103 Gateway Circle, Gatesville

### Kempner Water Supply

11986 E. Highway 190, Kempner

### Lometa City Hall

109 W. San Saba St., Lometa

### VISIT US ONLINE

[hamiltonelectric.coop](http://hamiltonelectric.coop)

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

#### Flag Day

Monday, June 14

#### Juneteenth

Saturday, June 19

#### Father's Day

Sunday, June 20

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# Tornado Season Peaks in June

**BE BETTER PREPARED** for tornado season, which peaks in June, with this safety information from the Texas Department of Insurance.

A tornado watch means tornadoes are possible in the area, and a tornado warning means a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar.

When a tornado warning has been issued for your area or if you see an approaching tornado, follow these safety tips.

**If you are in a school, hospital, factory, shopping center, business or home:**

- ▶ Stay away from windows, doors and outside walls.
- ▶ Do not open windows.
- ▶ Go to a basement, if one is available.
- ▶ Find an interior room on the lowest floor, if there is no basement.
- ▶ Cover yourself in blankets, towels or anything that will protect you from flying debris.

**If you are in a car or mobile home:**

- ▶ Get out. Find a substantial structure or designated tornado shelter. If no suitable structure is nearby, lie flat, face down, in the nearest ditch or depression and use your hands to cover your head to protect against flying debris. ■



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# Get Help Financing Farm Energy Efficiency Upgrades

**ENERGY-EFFICIENT SOLUTIONS** for farms and ranches are becoming more affordable as technology progresses, but the upfront costs of some solutions keep them out of reach for many folks.

But there's help out there for farmers and ranchers in the form of incentives, according to a Cooperative Extension System video in a YouTube series called Energy Answers for the Beginning Farmer & Rancher, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Incentives in the form of rebates, grants and low-interest loans aim to help agricultural producers take the leap to apply energy efficiency to their operations, the video explains.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program provides funding and technical assistance for energy audits and energy efficiency projects like lighting and diesel pump upgrades. Grants are available through the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service to qualifying farms in business for at least a year that have the capacity to produce at least \$1,000 in agricultural products and have a written energy conservation plan.

The program aims to "address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, increased soil health and reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, improved or created wildlife habitat, and mitigation against drought and increasing weather volatility," according to the USDA.

The Rural Energy for America Program, or REAP, also offers energy incentive programs through USDA Rural Development. This program, unlike EQIP, provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding for renewable energy initiatives and energy efficiency improvements.

"This program helps increase American energy independence by increasing the private sector supply of renewable energy and decreasing the demand for energy through energy efficiency improvements," according to the USDA. "Over time, these investments can also help lower the cost of energy for small businesses and agricultural producers."

Other places to look for funding include the State Energy Conservation Office, area soil and water conservation districts, university extensions, and equipment vendors. ■



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## Crank Up Summer Fun, Not Cooling Bills

**SUMMER IN TEXAS:** It's hot, and you and the kids don't want to go outside. But you also don't want to stay inside and crank up the air conditioner, which can get pricey. Instead try these activities to stay cool and enjoy long summer days without running up your power bill.

### Water Fight

Challenge your children to a battle with water balloons, squirt guns, sprinklers and hoses. Evaporation will help keep you cool! Just be sure to pick up all the balloon pieces when you're done so the little bits don't become litter or choking hazards.

### Giant Ice Cube Melt

Make giant ice blocks in your deep freezer or freezer by filling buckets, dishpans or other big containers with water then freezing them. Then have a race to see

who can melt their ice cube fastest using only their body.

### Ice Age Excavation

Take waterproof children's toys and freeze them in blocks of ice. Use kid-friendly tools to chip and melt away the ice to expose the toys.

### 'Bob' for Ice Cubes

Fill a kiddie pool with water and ice cubes. Have your kids try to kick out as many ice cubes as they can. Whoever kicks out the most ice wins.

### Make Popsicles

Freeze fruit juice or fruit purée poured into popsicle molds or ice cube trays to make cool treats.

### Jump Rope Water Challenge

Dare your kids to jump rope 10 times

while holding a paper cup of water. Whoever has the most water in their cup after 10 hops wins!

### Set up a Slip 'N Slide

Whether rented, purchased or improvised with a tarp and hose, a Slip 'N Slide can provide hours of wet and wild entertainment for the whole family.

### Water Table

A water table puts water and toys at toddler height for outdoor play.

### Make Ice Cream

Nothing says summer like a homemade creamy and sweet treat. Using a nonelectric ice cream maker is one way to enjoy this summer favorite without cranking up the AC. ■

# Get the Most Out of Cooling

**IF YOU'RE INSTALLING** any kind of air conditioner, be sure to get the right size. A unit that's too small won't cut the heat, but an oversize system wastes energy. Match room size with cooling capacity, measured in British thermal units, or Btu: the quantity of heat required to raise the temperature of 1 pound of water by 1 degree at a specified temperature. Follow these steps to determine what size AC unit will maximize your cooling.

1. Calculate the square footage of the area to be cooled.
2. Determine the best approximate cooling capacity using the table below (capacity will differ depending on ceiling height).

| Square Feet | Btu    |
|-------------|--------|
| 550–700     | 14,000 |
| 700–1,000   | 18,000 |
| 1,000–1,200 | 21,000 |
| 1,200–1,400 | 23,000 |
| 1,400–1,500 | 24,000 |
| 1,500–2,000 | 30,000 |
| 2,000–2,500 | 34,000 |

3. Adjust your calculations accordingly for these situations:

- ▶ Reduce capacity by 10% for shaded rooms.
- ▶ Increase capacity by 10% for sunny rooms.
- ▶ If more than two people regularly occupy a room, add 600 Btu for each additional person.
- ▶ If an AC unit is to be used in a kitchen, increase capacity by 4,000 Btu. ■



## Stay Safe in a Lightning Storm

**LIGHTNING STRIKES KILL** an average of 49 people in the United States each year, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and more than 400 people are hit by bolts each year. But if you prepare before an outdoor event and know how to protect yourself, you can keep your family safe from lightning. Follow these tips from NOAA:

**Plan ahead.** Just as you have an emergency plan for fires and weather events like tornadoes and hurricanes, form an action plan for lightning. Choose a safe shelter and time how long it takes to get there.

**Check the weather.** A simple forecast can tell you whether you should delay outdoor activities to avoid a dangerous situation.

**Look to the sky.** Dark skies, whipping winds and lightning flashes are all signs that you should stay indoors.

**Seek shelter.** As soon as you hear a rumble of thunder, head for a safe place; an enclosed structure with plumbing and wiring is best, or find a car. Open-air shelters, sheds and covered porches are often not safe places. Avoid tall trees that stand alone, towers, poles, and metal fences and other conductors of electricity. And keep out of open areas so that you're not the tallest object in a field.

**Wait it out.** Leaving shelter too quickly makes you vulnerable to lightning strikes. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder before you head back outdoors.

**Avoid corded phones and appliances.** If you're indoors when a storm hits, do not use phones or appliances with cords. Lightning can travel through your home's wiring. Water is also a great conductor of electricity, so don't take a bath or shower.

If someone near you has been struck by lightning, call 911 immediately. A certified person should begin CPR right away if necessary. ■



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## Pay It Back to Dad

**YOU MIGHT NOT** be able to help Dad get a discount on the family electric bill for Father's Day, but you can help him save energy. If you're shopping for a present for dear ol' Dad, consider energy-saving gifts:

**Energy-efficient power tools:** Cordless power tools paired with Energy Star-certified battery chargers could help save power and money. While you're at it, help Dad with his to-do list for quality time together.

**Gas or charcoal grills:** Cooking alfresco is a favorite summer pastime that doesn't need to use one bit of power. Keep Dad company outside while he prepares delicious grilled food for some fun bonding time.

**Smart thermostat:** Programmable thermostats offer users the option to preset the temperature based on when the family will be home. A smart thermostat also provides real-time feedback about energy usage. Do Dad a favor by remembering to turn off the lights and unplug appliances and devices when you're not using them.

**Nonpowered lawn tools:** Lots of outside tasks can be completed with manual lawn tools that don't plug in or burn fuel. Of course, helping Dad in the yard might be just as valuable a gift.

**Energy-efficient lightbulbs:** Purchase a pack of LEDs for Dad to use in his workspaces. Better yet, hunt down all the energy-inefficient lightbulbs in the house and replace them with better bulbs.

**Smart plugs:** These outlets work like power strips but are individual mini outlets that can be controlled with a smartphone app. Try plugging your devices into them, too, so that Dad can help you remember to turn devices off.

**Smart lightbulbs:** Whether Dad is obsessed with energy savings or ambiance or is just a techie, smart lightbulbs will dim or change the color of LED bulbs with the tap of a smartphone button or sound of his voice. ■



### DID YOU KNOW?

The COVID-19 relief bill passed in March helps vulnerable electric cooperative members pay their electric bills with \$4.5 billion in funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

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### POWER TIP

Vacuum your air conditioner's return vents to remove dust and grime to help your system operate at its best.

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# Community Calendar

Hamilton County Electric Cooperative is actively monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic. The following community event information was gathered in late April with sincere hopes that these events will be held. Please contact event sources directly to confirm event dates and details.

## Comanche

**Second Saturday Shenanigans Sip, Snack and Shop;** June 12, July 10; 10 a.m.–4 p.m.; historic downtown square.

**Red Dirt Dinner and Dancing,** June 12, gates open at 5 p.m., Comanche Roping Club Arena, 9101 Highway 377. The event will have food trucks and will feature Aaron Watson, Scott Haley and Ariel Hutchins.

**Father's Day Festivities,** June 14, 11 a.m.–3 p.m., downtown. Car show, food trucks, giveaways and kids activities.

**Comanche Evening Market;** June 19, July 17; 5–8 p.m.; downtown.

*For more information about Comanche County events, contact the Comanche Chamber of Commerce at (325) 356-3233 or email [comancheevents@gmail.com](mailto:comancheevents@gmail.com).*

## Copperas Cove

**Free COVID-19 testing,** every Tuesday, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., the Cove House Free Clinic, 108 E. Halstead Ave. Appointment required. Call (254) 289-9865.

**Farmers Market,** each Thursday through October, 4–7 p.m., at the corner of Avenue D and Second Street. Offering locally grown produce and handcrafted items. Sponsored by the city of Copperas Cove Parks and Recreation. For more information contact Ashley Wilson at (254) 542-2719 or [awilson@copperascovetx.gov](mailto:awilson@copperascovetx.gov).

**Food Truck Festival, June 12, Copperas Cove City Park.** The festival includes food trucks, beer and wine tents, live music, and bounce houses. For more information contact the city of Copperas Cove Parks and Recreation Special Events at (254) 542-2719 or [awilson@copperascovetx.gov](mailto:awilson@copperascovetx.gov).

**H-E-B Plus Summer Run to Fun Virtual 5K,** June 19.

*For information about Copperas Cove events, contact the Copperas Cove Chamber of Commerce at (254) 547-7571, email [chamber@copperascove.com](mailto:chamber@copperascove.com) or visit [copperascove.com](http://copperascove.com).*

## Evant

**Lone Star Barbecue Society Cook-Off,** June 4–5. For more information contact Natalie Hall at (254) 248-4012.

**Market Day,** June 19, 9 a.m.–3 p.m., Evant Square. Free for vendors. For more information contact P-Cay Burkhalter at (254) 791-5441.

**Junior Rodeo With Tommy Green Rodeo Company,** June 25–26, Evant Rodeo Association Arena, 1255 S. U.S. Highway 281.

**Fireworks,** July 4, Evant Park.

*For information about Evant events, contact P-Cay Burkhalter at (254) 791-5441 or [pcay@buenavistawildlifefafari.com](mailto:pcay@buenavistawildlifefafari.com).*

## Gatesville

*For more information about Gatesville events, go to [visitgatesvilletx.com](http://visitgatesvilletx.com) or [gatesvilletx.info](http://gatesvilletx.info) or call the Gatesville Chamber of Commerce at (254) 865-2617 or Gatesville Convention and Visitors Bureau at (254) 865-8951.*

## Goldthwaite

*For more information about Goldthwaite events, visit [goldthwaiteareachamber.com](http://goldthwaiteareachamber.com), call the Goldthwaite Area Chamber of Commerce at (325) 648-3619 or email [gcc@centex.net](mailto:gcc@centex.net).*

## Hamilton

**Circle T Arena,** 4007 W. Highway 36.

For information on upcoming events, visit [circletarena.net/calendar](http://circletarena.net/calendar) or call (254) 386-3559.

*For more information about Hamilton events, visit the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce on Facebook or at [hamiltontexaschamberofcommerce.com](http://hamiltontexaschamberofcommerce.com), email [hamiltonchamber@gmail.com](mailto:hamiltonchamber@gmail.com), or call (254) 386-3216.*

## Hico

*For information about Hico events, visit [hicochamber.com](http://hicochamber.com) or [facebook.com/hicochamberofcommerce](https://www.facebook.com/hicochamberofcommerce), call (254) 434-1249, or email [chamberhico@gmail.com](mailto:chamberhico@gmail.com) or [bluestarhico@gmail.com](mailto:bluestarhico@gmail.com).*

## Kempner

**Kempner Fest,** June 19, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Sylvia Tucker Memorial Park, 12641 U.S. Highway 190. Live concerts, barbecue



cook-off, vendors, games, inflatables, dance party, dunk tank and more.

For information about Kempner events, call Kempner City Hall at (512) 932-2180.

## Lampasas

**Trade Days; June 5–6, July 3–4; 9 a.m.–4 p.m.; 2646 E. Highway 190.** Merchandise includes antiques, collectibles, quilts, crafts, folk and fine art, new home furnishings, shabby chic furniture, new clothing, jewelry, candles, handbags, electronics, iron works, outdoor decor, plants, tools, and food. For more information contact Barbara Postel at (512) 734-1294.

**Spring Ho Festival, July 5–11.** Activities and festivities all week long. For more information contact the Spring Ho committee at (512) 556-5301 or visit [springho.com](http://springho.com).

**Toughest 10K in Texas, 5K and 1 Mile Run; July 10, 7–10 a.m.; Hancock Springs Park Pavilion; 1600 U.S. Highway 281 S.**

**Hoffpauir Riata Roundup Rodeo, July 29–31, gates open at 4:30 p.m., 580 Sports Complex Arena at 2351 FM 580 W.**

For more information about Lampasas events, contact the Lampasas County Chamber of Commerce at (512) 556-5172 or [lampasasinfo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lampasasinfo@sbcglobal.net), or visit [lampasaschamber.org](http://lampasaschamber.org).

## Lometa

**ATLAS Ride, June 5, 8:30 a.m., Stoneledge Winery, 518 CR 1403.** For information visit [texas4000.org/event/atlas-ride](http://texas4000.org/event/atlas-ride).

For information about Lometa events, contact the city of Lometa at (512) 752-3331.

## Pearl

**Pearl Bluegrass; June 5, July 3; doors open at 7 a.m.; Pearl Community Center, 6301 FM 183.** Jams and

stage shows throughout the day. Acoustic bands (no electric instruments) and musicians are invited. No fee to play onstage or to watch the shows. For information on how to sign up to perform, contact Anji Pearl Day at (325) 665-7996. Kitchen open 11 a.m.–5 p.m. RV parking with full hook-ups available on a first come, first park basis; 30 amps are \$20, and 50 amps are \$25. For more information visit [pearltxcommunitycenter.com](http://pearltxcommunitycenter.com) or the Pearl Community Center Facebook page or the Positively Pearl Facebook page.

**Pearl Book Cottage; June 5, July 3; 10 a.m.–5 p.m.** All kinds of books and resale items. Payment by donation with all proceeds going to charity. For more information call (254) 865-9282 or (254) 865-5864.

## Pidcoke

For more information about Pidcoke United Methodist Church events, call (254) 300-6342 or visit [pidcoke-umc.org](http://pidcoke-umc.org).

## San Saba

**Trade Day, June 5, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., courthouse square, 500 E. Wallace St.** Featuring food vendors, crafters and much more. For vendor information call (325) 372-4029 or email [sansabaedc@gmail.com](mailto:sansabaedc@gmail.com).

**Cowcamp Cook-Off, June 11–12, Risien Park.**

For information about San Saba events, contact the San Saba Visitor Center at (325) 372-5200 or the chamber of commerce at (325) 372-5141, or visit [sansabatexas.com/calendar](http://sansabatexas.com/calendar) or [sansabachamber.org](http://sansabachamber.org).



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## Bacon Pecan Pie Bars

- 1½ cups flour**
- 1½ cups powdered sugar**
- 1 cup (2 sticks) softened butter, divided use**
- 3½ cups chopped pecans, divided use**
- 1¼ cups light corn syrup**
- 1 cup light brown sugar**
- 4 eggs**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt**
- ½ cup cooked bacon, chopped**

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Whisk together flour and powdered sugar. Cut in  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup butter and mix until it forms a dough. Mix in 1½ cups chopped pecans. Press the dough into a greased 13-by-9-inch baking dish and bake 20 minutes.
2. After crust is done and removed from oven, raise oven temperature to 350 degrees.
3. In a saucepan, combine corn syrup, brown sugar and remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup butter. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture comes to a boil. Remove mixture from heat and allow it to cool a few minutes.
4. Using an electric mixer, beat the eggs. Gradually add the syrup mixture. Stir in vanilla and salt. Fold in the remaining pecans and bacon.
5. Pour filling over the crust and bake 30 minutes or until the center is set. Let the bars cool for at least 1 hour before cutting.

**MAKES 20 BARS**

 Find this and more delicious recipes online at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

### Hamilton County Electric Cooperative welcomes your local event submissions.

If you have any events that you would like listed in the Community Calendar, please contact Donna Harris. Information must be submitted two months in advance for the magazine. The calendar is published monthly and contains events scheduled in the month of publication and the following two months. HCEC reserves the right to edit and exclude events based on space available and other considerations. We do not certify the accuracy or reliability of any information posted in any listing in this Community Calendar. Please contact the event source directly to confirm event details. Email [donna.harris@hamiltonelectric.coop](mailto:donna.harris@hamiltonelectric.coop); write to HCEC at P.O. Box 753, Hamilton, TX 76531; or call 1-800-595-3401.